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Brief Relation

OF THE

PLAGUE

AT

NAPLES.

In the Year M. DC. LVI.

Where died 10, some days 15, and one day 20000
at least, (some say 25000) and the
next day but 500.

With Observations, Preservatives, and Cures.

Translated out of Italian into English.

L O N D O N,
Printed by J. Grismond, 1 6 6 5.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PLATE I



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A Brief Relation
OF
The PLAGUE at NAPLES,

In the Year M. D C. LVI. &c.

A Consultation made for the Sickness then raging and reigning, by the subscribed Physicians of this most Faithful City, by order of the most Illustrious Magistrates deputed for the Office of Health.



IN the Opening and Dissecting at that time of two dead bodies, one of a Man, the other of a Woman, on the first of June in the year 1656, by order from His Excellence, and the most Illustrious Magistrates deputed by this most faithful City, about the Sickness then rise, it was observed by the most expert Anatomists *Marco Aurelio Severino*, and *Felice Martorella*, (with the assistance of the chief Physician and other Doctors) that all the Bowels were infected with black spots, that is to say, the Heart, Lungs, Liver, Stomach, and the Intestines; besides, that the Bladder of Gall was plainly found to be full of black, viscid, and very thick choler, which

As for the distinction of the Spotted Feaver and Purples, and that which is called the Tokens, thus much is observed, That upon the incision of the Spots of the first two, there will arise a little Bloud or Glecting; but if the Tokens be cut, there will nothing of either arise, the whole Bloud or Juice being supposed to have some touch of a Gangrene or Sphacelation.

And as to the Bubi's Venereal and Pestilential, they are supposed to be thus distinguished, that the Pestilential Tumours lie lower in the Groin.

pertinaciously stuck to its Membrane; but above all, the vessels of the Heart were full of a grumous and black blood. And this was the summary of the Observation.

This being related by the same *Signor Felice* in an Assembly of the above-mentioned most Illustrious Magistrates, it was by them decreed, that together with the Signori *Domenico Coccia, Onofrio Riccia, Carlo Pignataro, Francesco Casaro, Giovanni Giacomo Carbonello, Carlo Jovene, Andrea di Mauro, and Salvator Borrello*, assembled in one place, they should determine and order what ought to be done, as well for the preservation as for the cure of this Sickness: wherefore these being met in the house of the said *Signor Felice*, they ordered for Preventives, (as to remedies most eane and at hand) that it was greatly helpful, First, to make in the houses Fires with fumes of Rosemary, Bay-berries, Juniper, Frankincense, and the like. Secondly, Treacle-water, Treacle, Mithridate, Pills of *Ruffus* against the Plague. The composition of dry Figs, Rue, Walnuts, and Salt, which was King *Mithridates* Preservative, and found in his Desk or Cabinet written with his own hand. The Magistral Bezoar Vineger made with Brimstone, Rue, Garlick, Cloves, Saffron, and Walnuts: the use of which is to dip in a piece or slice of bread, and take it fasting. Good too are the powders of Bole-Armonick, Terra sigillata, Terra di Malta, Citron seeds pounded, seeds of Basil, powder of Scordium, or Water-germander of *Constrayerva* (or instead of it, Virginia Snake-weed,) Bezoar-stone East and West: all which, or any, may be taken in the pulp of Citron, sharp Oenges, or with juice of Limons. In the mouth they may hold crude Sulphur, Zedoary, Aristolochia or Birth-wort, Gentian, Carline, white Dittany, Master-wort, Angelica, Vervain, Vincetoxicum or Swallow-wort, Goats-rue, Juniper-berries, Bay-berries, Ivy berries, any one of these. To smell to (besides the usual Balls) they commended a Sponge well wet in Vineger and Treacle, or else to make little hollow boxes of Cyprus-wood, Juniper, or of the Bay tree, and therein to put Treacle, Vineger, and Rue: good also be ein are the Oils of yellow Amber and of Camphir. Let the n anoint their Heart, Temples, Nostrils, and the Wrists with the Oil of Marsh-mallows, or Treacle-water, or make a liniment of Treacle, juice of Limons, Saffron, Dittany, Carline, boiled together, wherewith anoint. There may be made also a compound Vineger to put into a Basin, wherewith to bathe or wet the Hands, Wrists, and

and Nostrils, by taking a quantity of *Schænanthus*, roots of Carline, Nutmeg, Cloves, Benjoin, *Calamus aromaticus*, and boil all with a quantity of the best Vineger.

Of the same virtues to preserve are other Magistral Remedies endowed; such are the Antipestilential Elixir of *Crollius*, the great Electuary of *Matthiolus*, and his Oil of Scorpions, the Bezoartick Vineger of *Ernestus*, the Diacordium of *Fracastorius*, and above all is commended the powder of *Padre Gio. Baptista Eremitano*, which was experimented in the Plague at *Naples* the age past, and now observed with most happy success by many Physicians. The Composition of it is thus:

Rx Tormentil, red Sanders, white Dittany, burnt Harts-horn, Bole-Armoniack, fine Sugar, of each one dram, powder of Pearl, round Birth-wort, Cinamon, Gentian, red and white Coral, of each half a dram, Camphir two scruples: make all into a most fine powder. The dose is half a dram at a time.

And you may take this in the water of Scorzonera, Cardilli, or juice of Limons. Also for a preservative they may take one drop of the Great Dukes Oil, with some water of Goats-rue; and this too may do well in the Cure, increasing onely the quantity of the Oil. Duke of Florence.

Last of all, leaving a world of Remedies which here might be set down, the most potent preservative is the Elixir following:

Rx Aloes Hepatick, best Cinamon, and Myrrhe, of each three drams; Cloves, Mace, Lignum Aloes, Mastick, and Bole-Armoniack, of each half a dram; pure Sulphur four drams, Rosemary seven drams; macerate them all in Aqua-vitæ; and accordingly draw off the liquor. The dose is three or four drops at a time in Cardilli or Scorzonera water.

And thus much for the Preservation.

Now for the Cure, 'tis necessary first to cleanse the body, either upward by Vomits, or downward by Stools; and this ought to be done suddenly with all speed, before that the strength fails. The Vomit may be provoked with Antimony, or with its Infusion, or by Vineger of Squills distilled with Scordium, Tormentil, Scabious, Citron-seeds, roots of Asrabacca and of Gentian; or else rather with *Diasarum Fernelii*. Downwards they may purge with syrup of *Roses solutive*, *Confectio Hamech*, *Trifera Persica*, or *Rhubarb* with The Stomachs are dangerous and disapproved here.

decoction of Tormentil, Scordium, 1 amarinds, *Contrayerva*: and if this cannot be done or made ready timely enough, give four ounces of conserve of Damask-roses, with powder of Rhubarb, or with the Electuary of juice of Roses, with a little of *Contrayerva*, or the like.

As for letting blood, it ought to be determined from a great Fever, from the strength of the sick party, ebullition of the blood, and inclination of Nature; limiting the place of bleeding conformable to the motion which shall be observed either in the upper, or lower, or cutaneous parts; still remembering the advice of *Oribasius*, to scarifie the calves of the legs in case of great Fevers or Fermentations.

After purging let them use all possible means to provoke sweat by Diaphoreticks; for the which the berries of tree-Ivy (powdered and taken in the best wine, Carduus water, or other) are much praised: so flowers of Brimstone the weight of two scruples; Treacle also, or the above-mentioned great Antidote of *Matthiolus*, taking the weight of three or four drams, with adding thereto a dram and half of the forenamed Magistral Powder of *Padre Gio. Baptista Eremitano*, in two ounces of Aqua-vitæ. Good too is the salt of Ash, the most cried-up remedy of *Frederick vander Mye*, in the Contagion of *Breda*, (which was most like ours) to take thereof the weight of twelve Grape-kernels in Carduus-water. 'Tis moreover an easie sweat, pure Sulphur with Salt, boiled in Wine in *balneo Maria*, or else that of *Crollius*.

Let them insist continually in the use of the above-named Antidotes, increasing the dose; not neglecting also to try the use of *China*, the which for many reasons may happen not to be a little helpful; and the more, that it is in many places the appropriate remedy for these distempers.

Lastly, as to what pertains to the symptoms, that is, Bubo's or Botches, Pustules, and Spots, you must note that if they come out kindly and with *levamen*, ease and relief, in such case leave the work to Nature, helping their coming forth with Medicines emollient, relaxing, and attractive or drawing; such as are Frictions, dry Cuppings, or Scarifyings, Vesicatoirs or Blisterings; the which, if the swellings are below, then apply them a few fingers beneath; if they be above, then apply them in like manner so far above on the arms:

arms: noting that the said remedy of Vescicators may be changed in boiling Oil with Lime, applying them to the same parts; marking also, that if the said Evil or Plague comes with a *Coma*, that is, a sleeping, or other symptom in the Animal part, then the Blinners shall be placed both on the upper and lower parts.

Concerning the Bubo's or swellings in the Groin, if they bunch out kindly, you may cure them with gentle means, such as Oil of sweet Almonds, Oil of Lilies, Butter, Hens grease, or else with the simple Oil of Scorpions, or Ointment of Marsh-mallows, with the roots of Lilies beaten in a Mortar.

But if the Bubo's come not out well, then look out more efficacious Remedies, applying on the part Cupping-glasses with scarification, Leeches, Blisters, as before; this done, apply thereon a Poultice of Onions, Treacle, and Saffron, roasted in embers; after putting to some Hens-grease, or the like. If they be to be cut, open them halfripe with a cold Iron, passing thorow a Stuppe or Lint: and cure them with a compound Ointment of Gum Elemi, Ammoniacum, and Turpentine, of each a like quantity, with a little Saffron, Wax, and Oil of Roses as much as will suffice.

The Carbuncles, vulgarly by the Neapolitans call'd *Ampolle*, that is, Blains, are cured by cutting the part affected, scarifying it, and clapping thereto the same attractive or drawing Plaster, or Treacle with Onion, or else the Poultice of Scabious, Hens-grease, with hor and Treacle, hindering expressly by all means the Ustion or burning Irons. Good here to see and burn in the beginning, as well of the Carbuncles as of the Bubo's, that so the part may not be strengthened: you must leave these Sores open by the Missaries or Voiders, and Emunctories of the body, for a long time.

This is what in brief and privately could be collected (for the haste allotted us) concerning the Sicknes now reigning: hereafter there shall a Discourse be of the nature and of the occasions of the same, and other Medicines shall be proposed, according to the Observations that daily are made.

NAPLES, 2 June 1656.

FINIS.